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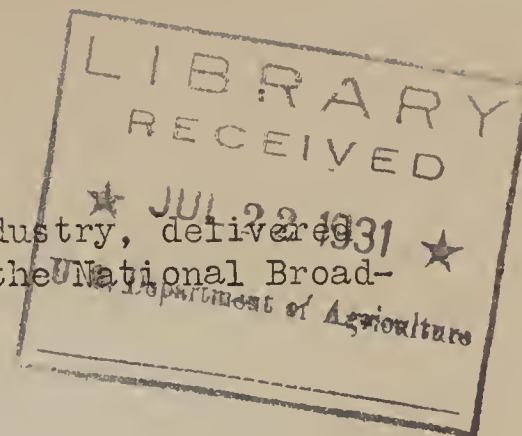
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 42 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, July 7, 1931.



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Hello Farm and Home Hour Folks:

Members of the Farm and Home Hour audience have been sending us quite a number of questions recently, so I am going to attempt to answer three or four of them.

The cherry crop is unusually heavy in certain sections this year, and brown rot has been showing up, especially where frequent showers have occurred. As a result, the Department has received numerous inquiries as to what to do to control brown rot. As a matter of fact, it is pretty hard to stop this fungous disease after it once gets a hold, especially where the crop is heavy and crowded in clusters on the trees.

I was talking to Dr. John W. Roberts of the Fruit Disease Section a few days ago, and he suggested that where the disease has not gained too much headway, it might do some good to apply dusting sulphur, but that he would not advise the use of sulphur where the cherries are to be canned, as the sulphur has an injurious effect upon canned cherries. Where cherries are reasonably ripe and are to be canned, Dr. Roberts advises getting them off of the trees and into the cans as soon as possible. Where the cherries are to be marketed, however, dusting with sulphur would undoubtedly help to prevent the spread of the brown rot. It should be borne in mind that the ordinary flowers of sulphur as found in the drug stores is not suitable for dusting fruit to control brown rot, but that a special finely ground dusting sulphur should be used.

Dr. Roberts says that the dusting of peaches with dusting sulphur for the control of brown rot is more effective than with cherries due to the fact that the sulphur sticks to the rough surface of the peach better than it does to the smooth surface of the cherry.

The development of brown rot on cherries, plums and peaches does not end with the picking of the fruit, but goes right on causing loss during the handling period. Even peaches shipped in refrigerator cars are subject to loss from brown rot, and the development of the disease is often very rapid after the fruit is removed from refrigeration. The main point in its control is to dust the fruit thoroughly at intervals of about one week prior to its ripening. Five or six dustings are often necessary to completely control brown rot, and even under the best of control measures, the disease is liable to develop on peaches, cherries and plums whenever the weather is rainy or foggy at the time that the fruit is ripening.

A member of the Farm and Home Hour audience writing from Independence, Missouri, wishes to know if there is anything known that will kill pear blight.

(over)



Dr. M. B. Waite, Head of the Fruit Disease Section, has the following to say about pear blight. I am quoting Dr. Waite.

"A very common disease of apple and pear trees, and one that appears during the month following blossoming, is pear blight, especially the form known as blossom blight. This disease attacks the apple as well as the pear, quince, and other pomaceous fruits. It is caused by a germ which readily cross-infects from the apple to the pear and vice versa. It is carried from flower to flower and from tree to tree by insects visiting flowers for nectar and pollen. There is always, therefore, the possibility, where this germ is present, of a bad outbreak during the month following blossoming.

These blossom infections may run down on the tree to various distances, or when they are on old trees, especially on fruit spurs, they may come only a short distance and then stop. The tender tips of growing twigs, not only terminal twigs but water sprouts and lateral branches, may also become infected. This is ordinarily referred to as twig blight. In either case it may run down on to the larger limbs or may enter the base of the tree and the roots through water sprouts.

Twig blight and blossom blight may not be very serious unless there is a great number of infections. When the disease enters the main limbs and the body, however, especially the collar of the trees at the ground line, it often kills the trees completely. It is mainly on the larger branches and trunks of the trees that the disease lives over winter to reinfect during the following spring.

Pear blight is controllable by the cutting-out method alone. During dry weather, in June and again in August, the trees should be gone over and the blighted twigs cut out, making the cut in the healthy wood well below the disease. Blighted areas on the large limbs, trunks and collars of the trees should be detected and cut out. In all the cutting operations the cut surfaces and implements should be disinfected with corrosive sublimate solution one part to 1000 of water. You can buy at the drug stores tablets of corrosive sublimate with directions for making up the solution. It should be applied by saturating a sponge or piece of cloth with it and wiping off the cut surfaces and tools with the same. Corrosive sublimate is a deadly poison; it should be kept in a non-metallic container, preferably glass, and should be plainly labeled "Poison," and kept out of the reach of children, stock, etc.

The pruning wounds in the eradication of pear blight should be painted immediately after cutting with the coal-tar creosote tree paint. This is made by thinning ordinary coal tar with creosote oil until it is of the consistency of thick paint. Usually it requires the addition of 1/4 to 1/5 creosote oil to the coal tar. This will serve not only as a disinfectant but also as a water-proof covering for the wound.

Unfortunately, it is more difficult to cut out great numbers of infections of apple blossom blight than to handle the disease on the larger branches or on the pear. Many of the smaller cases of blossom blight may dry up, however.

The blight winters over usually in the thick, fleshy bark of the branches and bodies of the trees, but also occasionally in twigs or small branches. The trees should be gone over in the fall just after the leaves are off, or at any time during the winter, and all of the so-called "hold-over blight" areas carefully removed. This is the most important factor in controlling the disease for the coming season, but this removal of sources of infection in an individual orchard will not protect the trees from infection from near-by orchards which may contain "hold-over" blight cankers.

When there is a decided outbreak of the disease to combat, it is desirable to check the growth of the trees by withholding cultivation and manures and fertilizer, particularly nitrogenous manures. The more vigorous the trees the more they suffer from blight. To seed the orchard down temporarily to grass or clover, or to plant cowpeas or cowpeas and sorghum, is frequently beneficial in checking the growth of the trees."

